

REMARKS

The present invention relates to a fuel tank for a motor vehicle and to a method for producing the same, wherein the inner face of the fuel tank is processed with a particular coating agent.

In the Office Action of April 22, 2004, claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on GB 2 317 921 A (Wright) in view of U.S. Patent 5,433,841 (Ichikawa).

In the present Amendment, the specification has been amended to correct an apparent typographical error at page 15, claim 1 has been amended, and claim 6 has been canceled.

The Examiner has cited the Wright reference as allegedly teaching a fuel tank for a motor vehicle whose inner face is processed with an “inorganic coating agent/catalyst”. The Examiner acknowledges that **Wright fails to disclose** the fuel tank wherein the agent/catalyst comprises fine particles carrying silver and/or copper inorganic fine particles wherein the fine particles carrying silver and/or copper are at least one selected from the group consisting an aluminosilicate, a phosphate, a silicate, a carbonate, a metal oxide, a metal hydroxide, a metal nitride and a metal carbide, **and fails to disclose** inorganic fine particles selected from the group consisting of aluminum oxide, titanium oxide, zirconium oxide and a silicate compound, **and furthermore fails to disclose** at least one binder selected from the group consisting of a synthetic resin, a metal oxide, a metal hydroxide, and a combination of an alkali metal salt and a curing agent. However, the Examiner has cited the Ichikawa reference as a secondary reference which allegedly makes up for all of the deficiencies of the Wright reference. With respect to method claims 11, 13, and 15-19, the Examiner has noted that the method limitations thereof do not further structurally limit product claim 1. Also, with respect to claims 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15 (sic) and 20, the Examiner has noted that these claims recite ranges pertaining to the amounts of various ingredients of the inorganic coating agent/catalyst, but the Ichikawa reference is cited as teaching that the amounts of various components is variable, and the Examiner has further asserted that discovering optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

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In response, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection as set forth in the Office Action is flawed, and should be withdrawn. Furthermore, independent claim 1 herein has been amended to further specify that the inorganic coating agent further comprises (C) at least one synthetic resin binder. The amended recitation of claim 1 is supported by the original disclosure, for example, claim 6, the paragraph bridging pages 8-9 of the specification, and the examples (e.g., note the resins C-1) (epoxy ester resin) and C-3 (acrylic silicone resin) as described at pages 19-20 of the specification).

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims herein clearly distinguish over, and are not obvious in view of, the cited Wright and Ichikawa references. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully submitted to be proper.

Further regarding the Wright reference, it is noted that Wright is not directed to a coating at all like that of the presently claimed invention, and is rather directed to forming an alloy/amalgam coating, which is quite different from that of present independent claim 1 and the dependent claims of the present application. Of course, the Examiner has already recognized that the Wright reference has multiple deficiencies as a reference.

With respect to the Ichikawa reference, cited as a secondary reference, Applicant submits that the Ichikawa reference is directed to a method for reforming hydrocarbons, and is not directed to a fuel tank having a specific coating composition on the inner face thereof.

Therefore, in the first place, Applicant respectfully submits that there is no basis, except impermissible hindsight, for modifying the teachings of the Wright reference based on the Ichikawa reference.

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Still further, in view of the amendment of present independent claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that even if the Wright and Ichikawa references might arguably be combined, neither reference discloses or suggests the synthetic resin binder component (C) now recited in claim 1.

Further in this regard, it is noted that in the case of the present invention, the coating film can be dried and cured at a low temperature (80 to 200°C). This feature is seen by reference to the specification, for example, in claim 13, and the paragraph bridging pages 15-16 of the specification.

On the other hand, according to U.S. Patent 5,433,841 (Ichikawa), the substrate is generally obtained by baking at high temperatures (1,100 to 1,600°C, see column 13, lines 33 et seq.; cf. paragraph bridging pp. 15-16). The two inventions are thus seen to be quite different in this respect.

Therefore, under any analysis, it is respectfully submitted that remaining claims 1-5 and 7-20 are unobvious and patentable over the cited art, and are now clearly in condition for immediate allowance.


In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-5 and 7-20 of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby earnestly solicited.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,


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